

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6227

S E C R E T SANTIAGO 5093

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PINOCHET

REF: SANTIAGO 4992

1. SUMMARY: I CALLED ON JUNTA PRESIDENT PINOCHET OCT 17. CONVERSATION REVEALED GOC PREOCCUPATION WITH IMAGE IN U.S. AND SENSITIVITY TO NEED FOR BOTH U.S. AND GOC CAUTION IN DEVELOPMENT OF OVERLY CLOSE PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION. PINOCHET EXPRESSED WORRY OVER NEED FOR LARGE PRICE INCREASES BUT SAW NO ALTERNATIVE. PDC PRESIDENT AYLWIN AND CARDINAL SILVA PLAN VISIT U.S. TO TRY TO HELP WITH CHILE'S PUBLIC IMAGE PROBLEM. END SUMMARY

2. LIKE NUMBER OF OTHER AMBASSADORS, I MADE A ROUTINE REQUEST FOR A PROTOCOL CALL ON JUNTA PRESIDENT PINOCHET A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO. PINOCHET RECEIVED ME OCT 17 (AND ALSO RECEIVED A NUMBER OF OTHER AMBASSADORS DURING THE COURSE OF THE AFTERNOON).

3. PINOCHET WAS IN A RELAXED AND FRIENDLY MOOD. ONE THING WHICH SEEMED TO BE EXERCISING HIM, HOWEVER, WAS A REPORT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED THAT A CHILEAN BY THE NAME OF F. HUNEEUS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A JOHN E. REILLY OF THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL. PINOCHET'S INFORMATION LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT REILLY HAD PUT SENATOR KENNEDY UP TO HIS HUMAN RIGHTS AMENDMENT TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT. PINOCHET ASKED ME IF I KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT REILLY. (COMMENT: SO FAR AS I CAN TELL, SECRET

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PINOCHET WAS EXAGGERATING HIS SUSPICIONS ON THE BASIS OF WHAT HE SEEMED TO KNOW. I EXPECT TO SEND PINOCHET A BRIEF NOTE TELLING HIM WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT REILLY FROM AN OLD BIOGRAPHIC REGISTER AND A WORD ABOUT THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL --

INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT DEROGATORY IN EITHER CASE. IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS DEROGATORY INFORMATION ABOUT REILLY WHICH WOULD MAKE THIS COURSE INADVISABLE, I WOULD APPRECIATE WORD.

4. AS PINOCHET HAD TOLD ME EARLIER (REFTEL) THAT HE WANTED TO TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHICH HE HAD HAD A CHANCE TO TALK WITH ADMIRAL HUERTA, I ASKED ABOUT PINOCHET'S REACTION TO THE HUERTA TRIP. PINOCHET SAID HE HAD HAD ONLY A VERY BRIEF OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH HUERTA, BUT HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE TRIP HAD GONE WELL. HE SMILED AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD WE WOULD LIKE TO BE HELPFUL, BUT IN SOME CASES WOULD JUST AS SOON THAT HELP WERE FUNNELED THROUGH BRAZIL OR SOME OTHER THIRD PARTY. SO FAR AS CHILE'S ECONOMIC PLANNING IS CONCERNED, PINOCHET SAID RATHER APOLOGETICALLY THAT THE GOC IS BEHIND SCHEDULE IN WORKING OUT ITS ECONOMIC PLANS AND NEEDS. HE LEFT ME WITH THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD BE GETTING BACK TO ME ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE LONG.

5. MENTIONING THE FACT THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOW BROUGHT A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES INTO CHILE, I SAID I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF WE PUT OUT A SMALL PRESS STORY. I ADDED THAT WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO FOLLOW ANY PREFERENCE OR GUIDANCE PINOCHET MIGHT HAVE IN THIS REGARD AND WAS THEREFORE MENTIONING IT TO HIM. I SAID I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL AT THIS MOMENT TO SHOW OUR INTEREST AND SUPPORT IN THIS HUMANITARIAN FIELD. PINOCHET SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE A FINE IDEA. HIS COMMENT WAS THAT PUBLICITY ON STRICTLY HUMANITARIAN THINGS WOULD BE FINE BUT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP "PRETTY QUIET" ABOUT ANY COOPERATION IN OTHER FIELDS. I AGREED, AND MENTIONED OUR ASSISTANCE WITH MINE DETECTOR GEAR AS AN EXAMPLLE OF THE OTHER KIND OF THING. (COMMENT: BOTH IN REGARD TO THIRD COUNTRY CHANNELING OF AID AND PUBLICITY, PINOCHET IS SHOWING CONSIDERABLE UNDERSTANDINT OF, AND AT LEAST SOME SENSITIVITY TO, THE PROBLEMS OUR TWO COUNTRIES FACE.)

6. IN THE GENERAL ECONOMIC FIELD, PINOCHET SAID THAT THE NECESSITY TO RESORT TO VERY LARGE PRICE INCREASES (SANTIAGO
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5065) WAS WORRYING HIM. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED HOW PAINFUL THESE INCREASES WILL BE FOR CHILEAN CONSUMERS AND PARTICULARLY CHILEAN WORKING PEOPLE. HE SAID THE NECESSITY FOR THIS WAS AN INHERITANCE FROM THE ALLENDE PERIOD AND A DOSE OF BITTER MEDICINE THAT CHILE HAD TO TAKE IN ORDER TO PUT ITSELF ON THE WAY TO RECOVERY. (COMMENT: THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT IS JUST BEGINNING TO TAKE THE PAINFUL ECONOMIC STEPS NECESSARY FOR RECOVERY. PUBLIC MORALE PRESSURES ARE SURE TO MOUNT RAPIDLY. WHETHER THE JUNTA WILL HAVE THE SINGLE-MINDED DETERMINATION TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON ITS PRESENT COURSE WITHOUT BACKTRACKING REMAINS TO BE SEEN.)

7. PINOCHET TOLD ME THAT CARDINAL SILVA HAS PROMISED HIM THAT

HE WILL TRY TO HELP WITH CHILE'S PUBLIC IMAGE PROBLEM ABROAD. PINOCHET THINKS THE CARDINAL MAY BE ABLE TO TRAVEL UP TO WASHINGTON AND TALK WITH SENATOR KENNEDY AND OTHER KEY POLITICAL AND CHURCH OFFICIALS WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO. I COMMENTED THAT THE CARDINAL WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED AS A LEADING PROGRESSIVE FIGURE IN THE CHURCH AND HE WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE. (COMMENT: PDC PRESIDENT AYLWIN CALLED ON ME MORNING OCT 18 AND SAID HE IS ALSO CONSIDERING A TRIP ABROAD IN WHICH HE WILL MAKE SOME EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CHILE'S IMAGE. AYLWIN EXPECTS TO GO TO A POLITICAL MEETING IN HAMBURG AND TO VISIT WASHINGTON IN EARLY DECEMBER. AYLWIN WILL TRY TO CONVINCE KENNEDY AND OTHER LEADING DEMOCRATS THAT CHILE NEEDS U.S. ASSISTANCE, AND THAT HELP IN CHILE'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY WILL SPEED NORMALIZATION AND THE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONALISM. AYLWIN EXPRESSED SOME MORAL QUALMS ABOUT INVOLVING HIS PARTY DEEPLY IN AN APOLOGIA FOR THE JUNTA -- PARTICULARLY BECAUSE HE FEARS THE LEY DE FUGA HAS BEEN USED ON OCCASION TO ELIMINATE EXTREMIST OPPONENTS OF THE MILITARY REGIME. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, AYLWIN SEEMS TO BE COMING AROUND TO THE VIEW THAT THE JUNTA GOVERNMENT MUST BE HELPED FOR THE SAKE OF CHILE. LIKE CERDA, HE CHARACTERIZED THE PDC-JUNTA OCTOBER 10 MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE.)

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